

## **NWS Travel Card Exemption Criteria/Policy**

### **Explanation**

By law, it is mandatory that all US Government employees who travel, obtain and use a Contractor Issued Government Travel Card.

Exemptions from this requirement are limited, and will be examined by the Department of Commerce on a case by case basis. Employees should keep in mind after receiving an exemption, that Travel Advances will not be granted; i.e., without a travel card, there is no mechanism for a travel advance. Authorized travel expenses will be reimbursed **after** travel has been completed and voucher has been filed and paid. **It should also be noted that employees are responsible for paying travel card expenses whether reimbursement has been received or not.**

GSA, Department of Commerce and NOAA Travel Regulations list possible exemptions as:

- (a) Infrequent travelers - those employees that only travel once a year. If the employee is expected to travel two or more times a year, they are required to obtain the travel charge card;
- (b) Employees whose travel charge card has been canceled because of delinquency or use for non-official purposes. If the employee's card has been canceled because of delinquency or non-official use, they are expected to fund their trip with personal funds. Their common carrier transportation will be charged to the centrally-billed travel account or to a Government Transportation Request (GTR) through the Travel Management Center. However, they **will not** be authorized to receive a travel advance;
- (c) Intermittent, seasonal, or temporary employees who have limited appointments;
- (d) Invitational travelers, employees with disabilities and employees with travel card applications pending; employees whose cards have been lost, stolen or damaged and they have not yet received a replacement card (Paragraph 301-51.2)
- (e) Travel expenses listed (Paragraph 301-51.2)
- (f) Certain relocation expenses (Chapter 302 of the Federal Travel Regulations, Relocation Expenses) except en-route travel and househunting trip expenses
- (g) A vendor does not accept the travel charge card;

In addition, the NWS, NOAA and DOC will consider exemptions based on other valid reasons, such as an employee being impacted by fraudulent activity by others. Complete files of the DOC and NOAA Regulations can be found at: <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/301-51.PDF> and <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/doc-51.PDF>

If an employee feels they qualify for an exemption they should provide detailed information for their requested exemption to their supervisor and follow the procedures listed below.

### **NWS Procedures for Requesting Exemption**

Follow the steps below to request an exemption.

- S      Send a written request with justification to their immediate supervisor, clearly specifying the reasons for requesting the exemption
- S      Supervisor should thoroughly review, then forward that request with their own recommendation to the Director of their Office/Region
- S      At the Director's disapproval, Director can notify supervisor/employee at that time
- S      At the Director's approval, the request should be forwarded with recommendation to the NWS CFO's office and a copy should be sent to the NWS AOPC.
- S      At CFO approval, the request will be forwarded to Director/Comptroller, Finance Office, NOAA.
- S      At NOAA approval, it will be sent to DOC for review

For more complete details of Department of Commerce Policy regarding **exemptions**, payments and/or use of personal funds see Department Policy Implementing Amendment 90, Part 301-51 - Paying Travel Expenses and Part 301-70 - Internal Policy and Procedure Requirements, which supplements the Federal Travel Regulations. This can be found on the NWS Travel Card website at: [http://www.nws.noaa.gov/cfo/tpc/travel\\_card\\_program.htm](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/cfo/tpc/travel_card_program.htm)

Requests should be made in a timely manner. If you have further questions, contact the NWS AOPC through the Travel Card website.